

Van Guysling House
Schenectady
Schenectady County
New York

HABS No. NY-374

HABS

NY,

47-SCH,

11-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New York

Historic American Buildings Survey

Prepared at Washington Office

VAN GUYSLING HOUSE
Schenectady, Schenectady County, New York

HABS
N.Y.
47-SCH E1
11-

Owner: General Electric Company (property)

Date of demolition: May 1939

Additional data:

Built by Elias van Guyssling, possibly, but more probably by his son Myndert. Elias van Guyssling became the owner of the farm in 1670, by deed dated November 22, 1670. His son, Myndert, was married in 1721 and died in 1771, and if he was the builder it was probably between these dates. The house was a wooden building and was a remarkable specimen of early Dutch architecture. The house was largely roof, a form of building both easy and economical of construction, requiring the minimum of iron work and nails and yet standing firmly against the winter's blasts. It is claimed to have been built in the seventeenth century, which, if true, makes it the oldest house in the Mohawk Valley, unless the Mabie house outdates it. Mary Riggs Diefendorf in her The Historic Mohawk, on page 50, states: "There is the Van Guyssling homestead, believed by some to have been built as early as 1664 and possibly antedating the Mabie house." This could not be correct, in accordance with deed dated 1670.

The same statement appears in Munsell's History of Albany and Schenectady Counties, pages 206 and 207.

This farm, usually called "Elias' Phantasie," remained in the Van Guyssling family until the death of Cornelius van Guyssling in 1865, when it passed into the possession of his stepson, John C. Perry. The Perry family sold it to the General Electric Company.

See Pearson's A History of the Schenectady Patent, pages 108, 182, 309, and 449.